

THE E-COMMERCE ENHANCEMENT
ACT OF 2000**HON. JAMES A. BARCIA**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 11, 2000

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced the Electronic Enhancement Act of 2000, a bill that will identify the continuous challenges facing small and medium-sized businesses and will assist them in overcoming these obstacles when they enter the world of e-commerce. I developed this legislation after recently hosting an E-Commerce Forum in my District, which was designed to ensure that small and medium-sized businesses have access to the booming e-commerce industry. With more than 300 business people in attendance, it was obvious to me that while there is great interest from small and medium-sized businesses for going online, these businesses face a number of challenges as they enter the world of e-commerce.

Specifically, this bill will establish an outside Advisory Panel made up of representatives from the Technology Administration, the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, the Small Business Administration, the Modernization Forum, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, along with other relevant parties, to determine the needs of small and medium-sized businesses. Based on the assessment of the Advisory Panel the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) will establish a pilot program for assisting small and medium-sized businesses in e-commerce. Competitive grants would be awarded to existing MEP centers that submitted e-commerce assistance proposals. The e-commerce needs of businesses will vary between regions of the country and along industry lines. Therefore, the needs of the community can be best served by relying upon the local expertise of current MEP centers rather than establish a national "one size fits all" program.

E-commerce is a facet of our economy that will enable numerous businesses to experience strong growth. Last year, e-commerce was a 100 billion dollar a year industry. In the next three years that number is expected to be 3 trillion dollars—a full 1/3 of our current 9 trillion dollar economy. The power of the Internet is the power to overcome the social, geographic and economic disparities that have traditionally stifled growth for all types of businesses. No longer is the small manufacturer in Michigan limited to buying his raw materials from one or two distributors or supplying his product to only nearby clients. Such business to business e-commerce will increase the efficiency of supply chains and even allow manufacturers to find new markets online. The same situation applies to the retailer. Up until a few years ago, the Main Street shop owner was limited to selling her goods to walk-in traffic. With the advent of online commerce, any retailer can sell to anyone in the United States and to almost anyone in the world.

These are the kinds of advantages that e-commerce can bring to business owners across the country. We must be sure that we do not leave any business behind, especially America's small and medium-sized businesses who are the backbone of our economy and the realization of the American dream for so

many. This legislation will allow small and medium-sized businesses to overcome the hurdles they face as they enter the e-commerce arena.

I urge my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join in supporting this important legislation.

INTERNET NONDISCRIMINATION
ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. KAREN MCCARTHY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 10, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3709) to make permanent the moratorium enacted by the Internet Tax Freedom Act as it applies to new, multiple, and discriminatory taxes on the Internet.

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Chairman, I rise to express concerns about HR 3709, the Internet Nondiscrimination Act, a bill which extends the moratorium contained in The Internet Tax Freedom Act of 1998 for five additional years until 2006.

As a former Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of the Missouri state house and former president of National Council of State Legislators (NCSL), I believe we need to address this issue with an eye toward creating a win-win situation for our states and localities, our mom and pop retailers on Main Street and the technology sector. I am not convinced that this bill has balanced all interests in a manner which achieves that goal.

I want electronic commerce to prosper and I support eliminating discriminatory taxes on this type of commerce. However, I also support finding a way to ensure Main Street businesses and state and local governments are not penalized by competitive advantages enjoyed by internet commerce companies. We need a level playing field and I am committed to finding one.

Not leveling the playing field could result in billions of dollars in lost revenue to states. By 2003 states will lose a total of approximately \$20.1 billion in revenue if businesses are not required to collect the use taxes that are owed by purchases on electronic commerce. My state of Missouri will lose a projected \$395 million—how will Missouri make up that revenue stream to ensure adequate funds for public education, critical infrastructure needs and other important state programs?

The piecemeal approach in HR 3709 prevents comprehensive solutions to the subject of taxes on the Internet. The existing moratorium does not expire until October 21, 2001. Merely extending the moratorium does not address the main issue of providing a level playing field for sales tax collection. In the coming 17 months which remain in the existing moratorium, we must consider comprehensive solutions.

Without a measured and thoughtful approach to addressing this complex issue we jeopardize the basic services which our constituents rely upon from our states and localities. We must sustain growth of the Internet and e-commerce with an appropriate revenue collecting structure built upon a foundation of fairness and equity to Main Street merchants.

MORE ANTI-CHRISTIAN ACTIVITIES
IN INDIA**HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 11, 2000

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I was distressed to read some recent articles showing that the repression of Christians in India continues. The RSS, the parent organization of the ruling BJP, has apparently published a booklet on how to besmirch Christians.

According to an article in the May 5 issue of India Abroad, the RSS has published a booklet on how to implicate Christians and other minorities in false criminal cases. It cites a Hindustan Times report that says the booklet, entitled "Save Hindus—Attacks and Laws," contains "guidelines for framing charges, false as well as genuine, against minorities." The booklet has been in circulation for three months, according to the article.

If India cannot learn religious tolerance, it is not deserving of the support of the free countries of the world. It is time to declare India a violator of religious liberty and other human rights until the situation improves. India should allow Amnesty International into Punjab and other troubled states to conduct an independent human-rights investigation. This has not happened since 1978. What is "the world's largest democracy" hiding? India should also hold a free and fair plebiscite on the question of independence for Khalistan, Kashmir, Nagaland, and the other states seeking their freedom from India.

I would like to introduce the article from India Abroad that I mentioned earlier into the RECORD for the information of the House and the public.

[From India Abroad, May 12, 2000]

ATTACK ON CHRISTIANS

New Delhi—A group of Christians who were distributing copies of the Bible and other evangelical literature in Vivekanandnagar, Ahmedabad, were reportedly attacked by activists of the right-wing Bajrang Dal on May 5.

The Christians were attacked with lathis (canes) and sharp-edged weapons, the reports said, adding that three persons were injured in the incident.

Samson C. Christian, executive member of the All India Christian Council, alleged that the attack was pre-planned as the Bajrang Dal was aware that members of the Operation Mobilization Association of Christians (OMAC) had been preaching in the area.

In a related development, reports stated that the Sangh Parivar, comprising Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the ideological parent of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and its affiliate organizations, have brought out a booklet in Gujarat, containing guidelines on how to implicate minorities in court cases, The Hindustan Times reported.

The 12-page booklet, titled "Hinduno Bachao—akraman ane kayedo" (Save Hindus—attacks and laws), contains guidelines for framing charges, false as well as genuine, against minorities under existing laws, the report said, adding that the booklet has been in circulation for the past three months.